Purchase of Westland Helicopters

3103. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total loss suffered by the country on account of purchase of Westland Helicopters:

(b) whether an enquiry was conducted for the defective purchase;

(c) if so, the persons held responsible for the defective purchase;

(d) if not, the reasons for not conducting an enquiry;

(e) whether Government took up the matter with the British Government for sale of poor quality helicopters and what was their response; and

(f) the action proposed to be taken by Government to avoid similar loss in future?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Acquisition of 21 Westland Helicopters was financed by a grant of British Overseas Development Administration and hence, there was no loss to the Government of India. However, during the period of operation of Westland Helicopters, Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited incurred an operational loss of Rs. 33.97 crores and aggregate loss of Rs. 95.67 crores.

(b) to (d) An enquiry was conducted to examine the various aspects relating to the purchase of Westland Helicopters. The enquiry did not assign in this regard responsibility to any person/persons.

(e) The issue of overall performance of Westland Helicopters was taken up with British Government on many occasions. However, inspite of best efforts, no satisfactory solution could be found for various technical problems in the operation/maintenance of Westland Helicopters. As a result, it was decided to ground the entire fleet with effect from 09.02.1991.

(f) Before taking a final decision on purchase of aircraft, the proposals are evaluated by technical and financial committees to ensure that the project is both technically and financially viable.